

REMARKS

In the Office Action of November 14, 2006 the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 and 11-12 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kim (6,355,066). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 has been amended and combined with claim 2 to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from Kim. None of the embodiments disclosed by Kim have or suggest a radially outwardly extending projection that is spaced proximally a predetermined distance from the proximal-most ring. No new matter is added since this feature is clearly disclosed in the application as filed.

Regarding claim 3, also amended to more clearly distinguish it from Kim, it is noted that the distal ends of the elongated members are tapered along a portion of the elongated members that extends distally from the distal-most ring. No such feature is disclosed or suggested by Kim.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-2, 4-9 and 11-12 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Bojarski et al. (6,746,483). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The aforementioned claim amendments are deemed sufficient to distinguish the claimed invention from Bojarski et al.

Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form and should now be allowable.

Claims 4 through 9 are dependent on claim 1 directly or indirectly and should be allowable for this reason alone.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted the claims are now in condition for allowance.